

Message Text

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ACTION DHA-05

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O R 311445Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6049
INFO AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
AMEMBASSY NASSAU
COMNAVBASE GUANTANAMO BAY CUBA
SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT AU PRINCE 3251

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF, HA
SUBJECT: HAITIANS AT GUANTANAMO BAY

REF: (A) N05710 O P 290400Z AUG 77 COMNAV BASE GUANTANAMO BAY
CUBA (NOTAL), (B) SECSTATE 206502

1. EMBASSY BELIEVES REFTEL A REPRESENTS GOOD AND THOROUGH ANALYSIS OF CONDITIONS OF 101 HAITIANS.
2. WITH REFERENCE TO THOSE CLAIMING ARREST BECAUSE OF SUSPICION OF BELONGING TO CLANDESTINE POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS, WE CANNOT VERIFY WITHOUT RECOURSE TO GOH. ON THE FACE ON IT, HOWEVER, WE SEE NO REASONABLE GROUNDS FOR ASSUMING GOH POLITICAL INTEREST IN THOSE PERSONS.
3. WITH REFERENCE TO FORMER MEMBERS OF MILITIA, WE WOULD DOUBT THEY WOULD BE SUBJECT TO REPRISAL FOR DEPARTING COUNTRY. IN ANY EVENT, EMBASSY COULD ELICIT FURTHER ASSURANCES ON THIS POINT FROM GOH IF DESIRED.

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4. WE AGREE THAT CASES OF RELATIVES OF COAST GUARD REBELLION ARE DUBIOUS. IT IS TRUE THAT GOH RECENTLY AMNESTIED PERSONS INVOLVED IN COAST GUARD REBELLION AND COUNTLESS RELATIVES OF PARTICIPANTS IN THAT EVENT ARE LIVING UNMOLESTED IN HAITI.
5. WE ALSO DOUBT THAT LAST TWO HAITIANS, BRUNEL PHARAU

AND ILIAN JEAN-BAPTISTE, WOULD BE EXCEPTED FROM GOH ASSURANCES THAT RETURNEES WILL NOT BE HARRASSED FOR THEIR ILLEGAL DEPARTURE ABOARD THE SAINT JOSEPH. GOH GAVE ASSURANCES ADVISEDLY AND WOULD NOT, IN OUR OPINION, WANT OR BE INCLINED TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST PERSONS WITH SO LITTLE APPARENT GROUNDS FOR BEING CONSIDERED POLITICAL FIGURES. ON THE BASIS OF THEIR OWN TESTIMONY, NEITHER APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN SUBJECT TO SERIOUS VIOLATIONS OF THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS AND IN OUR OPINION HAVE NOT ESTABLISHED A GENUINE FEAR OF PERSECUTION IF RETURNED TO HAITI. AS JEAN-BAPTISTE AND ALL OTHER HAITIANS KNOW, OF COURSE, THERE IS BY NO MEANS THE SAME FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN HAITI AS IN THE US AND RECKLESS ESPOUSAL OF HIS ANTI-GOVERNMENT SENTIMENTS FOLLOWING HIS RETURN WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY CREATE TROUBLE WITH THE AUTHORITIES. EMBASSY COULD PROBABLY VERIFY CERTAIN ASPECTS OF BOTH JEAN BAPTISTE'S AND PHARAU'S ACCOUNTS, IF NECESSARY, BUT IT WOULD TAKE SOME TIME AND WOULD BE FACILITATED IF WE HAD FURTHER DETAILS SUCH AS NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF FRIENDS AND RELATIVES IN HAITI.

6. FOREGOING DRAFTED BEFORE RECEIPT REFTEL B. IN EXAMINING OPTIONS FOR DEALING WITH HAITIANS, EMBASSY WOULD LIKE ADD ADDITIONAL OPTION OF RETURNING ALL 101 HAITIANS TO HAITI IN LIGHT OF OUR COMMENTS IN PARAGRAPH FIVE ABOVE. ALTERNATIVELY, WE PREFER RETURNING IMMEDIATELY TO HAITI ALL BUT THE FOUR REFUGEES ABOUT WHOM SOME DOUBT EXISTS (THE TWO MILITIA

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DESERTERS PLUS PHARAU AND JEAN-BAPTISTE) WHO WOULD EITHER REMAIN IN GUANTANAMO OR BE TRANSFERRED TO MIAMI WHILE THEIR CASES ARE COMPLETED.

7. IN VIEW OF CONTINUING ALLEGATIONS OF MISTREATMENT OF HAITIAN SUGAR CANE CUTTERS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND LONG HISTORY OF ANIMOSITY AGAINST HAITIAN IMMIGRANTS ON PART OF SOME DOMINICANS, WE QUESTION PROPRIETY OF SETTLING GUANTANAMO REFUGEES THERE, BUT WE DEFER TO EMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO'S OPINION ON THAT ASPECT.

8. MORE BASIC QUESTION SEEMS TO BE WHAT KIND OF A PRECEDENT WE SET IN THIS CASE. IF THERE ARE THOSE WITH GENUINE CLAIMS OF POLITICAL ASYLUM, THEN BY ALL MEANS THEY SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO THE UNITED STATES FOR FURTHER PROCESSING. IF NOT, ALL THE HAITIANS SHOULD BE RETURNED TO HAITI TO DISCOURAGE THE CHANCE THAT THE CONTINUING STREAM OF SMALL-BOAT REFUGEES FROM THIS SOUNTRY WILL CONCLUDE THAT GUANTANAMO OFFERS JUST AS CERTAIN A REFUGE AS MIAMI.

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